

# Italian Companies in Transylvania

## A Multicultural Approach

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*Beside this phenomenon of the Italian delocalization in Romania, there is a process that is taking place the other way round: the Romanian migration to Italy for work.*

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**A**CCORDING TO specialists, Italian investments in Transylvania are based on several fundamental reasons,<sup>1</sup> such as low labour costs and low costs of natural resources, the strategic position as compared to other countries from Central and Eastern Europe, and the number of inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, they take into account the lower production costs or the size of the sales market. However, there are additional reasons for the delocalization of the Italian companies in Transylvania. They will be further discovered by analysing the set of questionnaires we sent to the representatives of these firms.

## 1. Case Study: Italian Companies in Transylvania

**A**S WE have already mentioned, for the purposes of our research, we decided to make a questionnaire for the representatives of the Italian companies that are delocalizing in Romania. Given the fact that this article is part of a comparative study on two regions—Transylvania and Friuli-Vene-

zia Giulia—, we found it useful to research only on the situation of the Italian companies in Transylvania and not on the whole Romanian territory.

As in the case of any empirical research, we followed all of its three main steps: preparation, collection of data, and interpretation of results. We will further describe each step we took with our questionnaire.

### 1.1. Preparation

**T**HE PREPARATION for our research consisted in dealing with theoretical aspects, methodological aspects, and research organisation. The *theoretical aspects* refer to the object of our research and our hypotheses. The *object* of our research is to prove the cultural similarities (traditions, habits, language, ethnic minorities, traces left by the Habsburgs, etc.) of the populations living in the two abovementioned regions. We sought to investigate the possible non-economic reasons that make the Italian investors delocalize in Transylvania. We drafted the questionnaire in keeping with the following *hypothesis*: although the economic situation of the two regions is different, it seems that there are some common elements related to the Latin roots of the two peoples. Italian investors delocalize in Transylvania for economic reasons, but also because they feel good here and like the Romanian food, language, mentalities, and culture. The same goes for the Romanians that leave their country in order to go to work in Italy.

The *methodological aspects* are related to the research techniques, the drafting of the questionnaire, and the sample. The *research technique* we chose was the written inquiry. We went on the field and gave the questionnaires to the representatives of the Italian companies in Transylvania. They filled them in after having understood the explanations we provided. When *drafting the questionnaire*, we took into account both form and content. The first category refers to the number of questions, their order and page setup, the way of registering the answers, and illustrating possible answers. Thus, our questionnaire is made up of 59 questions, divided into 8 subcategories: 1. Socio-demographic Variables, 2. Social Identity, 3. Social Capital, 4. Business in Italy, 5. Business in Romania, 6. Reasons for Coming in Romania to Do Business, 7. Supporting Bodies, 8. Social Relations in Romania. The second category refers to the choice of words, the types of questions (closed or open), and the possible answers. We tried to use a language accessible to every person in the category we chose, with clear questions and answers. Furthermore, we used both closed (46) and open (13) questions. From the total of 46 closed questions, 12 are ‘Yes/No’ questions. Moreover, we provided answers for 46 questions, while 13 questions required an elaborate answer from the subject. Our *sample* was made up of 40 persons, either man-

agers or administrators of Italian companies in Transylvania. Geographically speaking, our sample covers 9 Transylvanian counties: Alba, Arad, Bihor, Cluj, Hunedoara, Maramureș, Sălaj, Sibiu, and Timiș.

The *research organisation* contained the following elements: drafting of the research calendar, providing all necessary means and instruments for the field trip, and solving of the problems met on the field. The research was done during a period of two months in all the abovementioned Transylvanian counties.

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE REPRESENTATIVES  
OF THE ITALIAN COMPANIES THAT DELOCALIZED IN ROMANIA**

A. Socio-demographic Variables

1. Gender:
  - a. masculine
  - b. feminine
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years old
3. Marital status:
  - a. married
  - b. cohabitation
  - c. divorced
  - d. separated
  - e. single
  - f. widower/widow
4. Do you have children?
  - a. No
  - b. Yes. How many? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Citizenship:
  - a. Romanian
  - b. Italian
  - c. double Romanian-Italian
  - d. Other \_\_\_\_\_
6. Nationality:
  - a. Italian
  - b. Romanian
  - c. Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. Religion:
  - a. Catholic
  - b. Protestant
  - c. Orthodox
  - d. Other \_\_\_\_\_
8. Where do you live in Romania?
  - a. town/city \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. county \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your residence of origin? (city, province and region in Italy)

- a. city \_\_\_\_\_ b. province \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. region \_\_\_\_\_

10. Education:

- a. secondary school    b. high school    c. university    d. postgraduate (master's degree, Ph.D.)

## B. Social Identity

11. According to your information, how many Italians are living in Romania today?

- a. less than 3,000    b. 3,000–5,000    c. 5,000–8,000    d. 8,000–10,000  
 e. more than 10,000

12. In your opinion, the number of the Italians living in Romania today is:

- a. small    b. big

13. If you have chosen the latter, what would be the reasons for this choice in your opinion?

- a. low business costs    b. low living costs    c. less bureaucracy    d. a favourable political situation  
 e. they feel at home here (traditions, language, peoples, culture similar to those in Italy)

14. Which are, according to their importance, the first five words that come to your mind when you think of Italy?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. \_\_\_\_\_

15. Which are, according to their importance, the first five words that come to your mind when you think of Romania?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. \_\_\_\_\_

16. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Having been born in Italy

17. What are, in your opinion, the 3 most important things for someone to be considered Italian? Please choose from the list above and fill in the table according to their importance; I is the most important characteristic, while III is the least important one:

- a. have Italian as mother tongue
- b. have Italian citizenship
- c. be Catholic
- d. live in Italy
- e. respect Italian traditions
- f. having been born on the Italian territory
- g. feel Italian

18. What are, in your opinion, the 3 most important things for someone to be considered Romanian? Please choose from the list above and fill in the table according to their importance; I is the most important characteristic, while III is the least important one:

- a. have Romanian as mother tongue
- b. have Romanian citizenship
- c. be Orthodox
- d. live in Romania
- e. respect Romanian traditions
- f. having been born on the Romanian territory
- g. feel Romanian

19. How do you think Romanians see the Italians in Romania? Choose 3 variants.
- |               |             |            |           |              |         |
|---------------|-------------|------------|-----------|--------------|---------|
| Honest        | Civilised   | Neglectful | Selfish   | Hard-working | Thieves |
| Old-fashioned | Intelligent | Hypocrite  | Lazy      | Modest       | Proud   |
| Hostile       |             | Welcoming  | Religious | United       |         |
- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. DK/DA<sup>3</sup>
20. Do you think that Romanians see differently the Italians in Romania as compared to the Italians in general?
- a. Yes b. No c. DK/DA
21. How do you think the Italians in Romania see the Romanians? Choose 3 variants.
- |               |             |            |           |              |         |
|---------------|-------------|------------|-----------|--------------|---------|
| Honest        | Civilised   | Neglectful | Selfish   | Hard-working | Thieves |
| Old-fashioned | Intelligent | Hypocrite  | Lazy      | Modest       | Proud   |
| Hostile       |             | Welcoming  | Religious | United       |         |
- a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. DK/DA
22. Do you think that the Italians in Romania see differently the Romanians as compared to the Italians in general?
- a. Yes b. No c. DK/DA

### C. Social Capital

23. Do you think we can trust most of the people?
- a. Yes b. No
24. How much do you trust ...
25. Have you had any relation with one of the following institutions during the last 6 months?

26. How much do you trust the following institutions in Romania?

27. In your opinion, how much do Romanians trust the Italians in Romania?

- a. Very much   b. Much   c. Little   d. Very little   e. At all

28. What is your proficiency in Romanian?

29. Did you take Romanian lessons when you came to Romania?

- a. Yes   b. No

30. How efficient those courses proved to be for you?

- a. very efficient   b. efficient   c. not very efficient   d. not at all efficient

31. Do you think it is important for an Italian living in Romania to know Romanian very well?

- a. Yes   b. No   c. DK/DA

32. How often do you write letters to people in Italy?

33. How often do you contact Italy by e-mail?

34. How often do you make phone calls to people in Italy?

#### D. Business in Italy

35. What was your job in Italy before coming to Romania? \_\_\_\_\_

36. Were you an employee or an employer in Italy?  
a. employee    b. employer

37. Do you or your family have your own business in Italy?  
a. Yes    b. No

38. If yes, what kind of activity do you perform? \_\_\_\_\_

39. What was your monthly income in Italy? \_\_\_\_\_ (euro)

#### E. Business in Romania

40. When did you come to Romania for business? \_\_\_\_\_

41. What was your first job in Romania? \_\_\_\_\_

42. Did you come to Romania for financial reasons?  
a. Yes    b. No



43. Do you or your family have your own business in Romania?

- a. Yes    b. No

44. If yes, what kind of activity do you perform? \_\_\_\_\_

45. What is your monthly income in Romania? \_\_\_\_\_ (euro)

46. The name of your company in Romania: \_\_\_\_\_

#### F. Reasons for Coming to Romania to Do Business

47. Please fill in the table, according to their importance, with your reasons. Choose among those listed above or, if you think there are others, please name them, too. (I) is the most important reason, while (VIII) is the least important.

I. low costs

II. less bureaucracy

III. a favourable political situation

IV. Latin traditions

V. a language easy to learn

VI. welcoming people

#### G. Supporting Bodies

48. Who supported you to start your business and to what extent?

a. in Italy

b. in Romania

49. Your coming to Romania was supported by:

- a. Your relatives that had already been here
- b. Italian friends or people that had already been here
- c. Work contract
- d. Tourist visa
- e. Others. Who/What exactly?

50. Are you alone or with your family in Romania?

- a. Alone
- b. With some members of my family
- c. With my whole family
- d. Other situation. Which exactly? \_\_\_\_\_

#### H. Social Relations in Romania

51. What was your first impression when coming to Romania?

- a. Positive
- b. Negative

52. If your first impression was positive, please give details:

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53. If your first impression was negative, please give details:

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54. How do you feel now in Romania?

55. How do you get along with the Romanians?

- a. very well    b. well    c. bad

56. Do you have Romanian friends?

- a. Yes    b. No

57. Fill in the table, according to their importance—(I) the most important, (VIII) the least important—the similarities or differences between the Romanian and Italian culture. Please choose from the list above, or, if you think there are others, please insert them, too.

- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I. mentality            | II. traditions              |
| III. language           | IV. gastronomy              |
| V. the political system | VI. the bureaucratic system |

58. For the next two or three years do you intend to do the following?

59. If your answer was positive, give details about the types of courses you would like to attend and why...

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## 1.2. Collection of Data

**A**FTER HAVING collected the questionnaires from the subjects, we started to process the data and extract the percentages. First of all, we checked if all questionnaires were complete, exact and uniform. We read all the answers and tried to see if they were coherent and did not contradict one another. In some cases we found out that the subjects had not correctly understood the questions and, consequently, had provided unclear answers. Our decision in these cases was not to take into account those questionnaires. Thus, we could easily see the result for each question and make the corresponding comments on them.

## 1.3. Interpretation of Results

**B**EFORE INTERPRETING the results of our questionnaire, we will present the percentages obtained. We should mention that the questionnaires filled in by the subjects were either in Italian or in Romanian, as our sample was made up of Italian people, some of whom knew Romanian very well. That is why we will insert those versions with some interesting answers in the Appendices.<sup>4</sup> However, given the fact that our thesis is written in English, we considered it useful to attach also an English version of the questionnaire.<sup>5</sup>

After having collected all data, we obtained the following results:

**A. Socio-demographic Variables**

- |     |          |                 |                        |                            |                |
|-----|----------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1.  | a. 95%   |                 | b. 5%                  |                            |                |
| 2.  | 27%      |                 | 25–35 years old        |                            |                |
|     | 20%      |                 | 36–45 years old        |                            |                |
|     | 42.5%    |                 | 46–60 years old        |                            |                |
|     | 7.5%     |                 | more than 60 years old |                            |                |
|     | 3%       |                 | DA <sup>6</sup>        |                            |                |
| 3.  | a. 57.5% | b. 7.5%         | c. 7.5%                | d. 5%                      | e. 22.5% f. 0% |
| 4.  | a. 45%   | b. 55% of which |                        | 52.5%: 1–3 children        |                |
|     |          |                 |                        | 2.5%: more than 4 children |                |
| 5.  | a. 7.5%  | b. 87.5%        | c. 5%                  | d. 0%                      |                |
| 6.  | a. 97.5% | b. 2.5%         | c. 0%                  |                            |                |
| 7.  | a. 95%   | b. 0%           | c. 2.5%                | d. 2.5%                    |                |
| 8.  | a. -     | b.              | 45% Cluj               | 12.5% Bihor                |                |
|     |          |                 | 10% DA                 | 7.5% Alba                  |                |
|     |          |                 | 7.5% Sălaj             | 5% Hunedoara               |                |
|     |          |                 | 5% Maramureș           | 2.5% Sibiu                 |                |
|     |          |                 | 2.5% Arad              | 2.5% Timiș                 |                |
| 9.  | a. -     | b.              | 10% Bologna            | 7.5% Padua                 |                |
|     |          |                 | 5% Vicenza             | 77.5% others               |                |
|     |          | c.              | 20.5% Emilia-Romagna   | 20.5% Veneto               |                |
|     |          |                 | 12.5% Lombardy         | 12.5% Tuscany              |                |
|     |          |                 | 7.5% Abruzzo           | 26.5% others               |                |
| 10. | a. 15.4% | b. 59%          | c. 23%                 | d. 2.6%                    |                |

**B. Social Identity**

- |     |  |                        |                           |          |        |
|-----|--|------------------------|---------------------------|----------|--------|
| 11. | a. 22.5%   | b. 15%                 | c. 15%                    | d. 20.5% | e. 27% |
| 12. | a. 23.1%   | b. 76.9%               |                           |          |        |
| 13. | a. 66.7%   | b. 8.3%                | c. 8.3%                   | d. 0%    | e. 0%  |
|     | The remaining 16.7% don't think the number is big. |                        |                           |          |        |
| 14. | a. family 41.5%                                    | b. home 20%            | c. traditional food 18.3% |          |        |
|     | d. friends 10.2%                                   | e. culture 10%         |                           |          |        |
| 15. | a. fun 25%   | b. opportunities 22.5% | c. beautiful women 20.3%  |          |        |
|     | d. intelligent people 16.2%                        | e. Dracula 16%         |                           |          |        |

16.

17. I. have Italian as mother tongue 31%  
 II. respect Italian traditions 20.5%  
 III. feel Italian 8.5%  
 other 40%

18. I. have Romanian as mother tongue 19%  
 II. respect Romanian traditions 16.2%  
 III. have Romanian citizenship 13.8%  
 other 51%

19. a. civilised 32%                      b. hard-working 31.3%  
 c. proud 21.7%                        d. DK/DA 15%

20. a. 55.6%                                b. 44.4%                      c. 0%

21. a. welcoming 28.9%                b. proud 26.6%  
 c. religious 20%                        d. DK/DA 24.5%

22. a. 73.5%                                b. 26.5%                      c. 0%

### C. Social Capital

23. a. 43.2%                                b. 56.8%

24.

25.

26.

27. a. 0%      b. 29.7%      c. 56.8%      d. 8.1%      e. 5.4%

28.

29. a. 17.5%      b. 82.5%

30. a. 5%      b. 5%      c. 7.5%      d. 82.5%

31. a. 95%      b. 0%      c. 5%

32.

33.

34.

#### D. Business in Italy

35. -  
36. a. 31.6%      b. 68.4%  
37. a. 60%        b. 40%  
38. -  
39. -

#### E. Business in Romania

40. 2.7% before 1989                              23.7% between 1990 and 1995  
    36.8% between 1996 and 2000        36.8% between 2001 and 2006  
41. -  
42. a. 56.4%      b. 43.6%  
43. a. 82.5%     b. 17.5%  
44. 14.8% retailers                                  14.8% real estate  
    11.1% ready-made clothes and shoes       11.1% food industry  
    7.4% constructions                              40.8% others  
45. -  
46. -

#### F. Reasons for Coming to Romania to Do Business

47. I. low costs 75.8%  
    II. less bureaucracy 52.4%  
    III. a language easy to be learned 46.7%  
    IV. Latin traditions 40.5%



V. a favourable political situation 37.5%

VI. welcoming people 28.1%

VII. -

VIII. -

#### G. Supporting Bodies

48. a. -

b.

49. a. 11.4%    b. 45.7%    c. 11.4%    d. 14.3%    e. 17.2%

50. a. 67.5%    b. 17.5%    c. 7.5%    d. 7.5%

#### H. Social Relations in Romania

51. a. 61.5%    b. 38.5%

52. -

53. -

54.

55. a. 35%    b. 65%    c. 0%

56. a. 90%    b. 10%

57.

58.

59.

We should start by saying that there are ten questions<sup>7</sup> that have no answer. This is because the subjects did not want to answer or they misunderstood the question. Consequently, we considered that the sample that provided valid answers was not representative for the final interpretation of the results.

Moreover, three questions<sup>8</sup> have only partial answers. In the case of questions 47 and 57 this was due to the fact that subjects were allowed to choose from six answers only and to add some other two if they could. Consequently, the box contained eight possible answers, while they filled in only six. As far as question 48 is concerned, we refer only to point a. Our subjects did not answer this question, as it refers to the help they were given in order to start their business in Italy. As the questionnaire was mainly referring to their business in Romania, they decided not to answer in this case.

We will further analyse some of the answers provided for each section: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H. Of course, we will refer only to those questions that are the most representative for the aims of our research.

### Section A:

*Question 1.* The results of our questionnaire proved that 95% of the subjects are men. This shows a greater flexibility in the case of male subjects when it comes to living and working abroad. Women tend to be closer to their family and home.

*Question 2.* 42.5% of the subjects were 46–60 years of age. This category is followed by those between 25 and 35 years of age, with 27%. This might mean that older investors go to foreign countries after having already led a business in their own country. In this case their experience pushed them to risk by investing on new markets with the aim of obtaining bigger profits. On the contrary, the second category contains young people whose inexperience and desire of adventure brought them to Romania.

*Question 3.* 57.5% of the answers refer to married people. There might be two possibilities: either they are married to Romanian citizens, or they had already married in Italy and brought their family in Romania. In both cases it is obvious that the Italians were attracted by this country and its culture, as it is similar to theirs. The second category (22.5%) is represented by single people. Of course, there is no doubt that it is easier to go and work in a foreign country when one does not have a family and obligations.

*Question 8.* As the questionnaire was applied exclusively to Italian investors in Transylvania, it is obvious that they all live in Transylvanian countries. According to the results, the order is the following: Cluj (45%), Bihor (12.5%), Sălaj and Alba (7.5% each), Hunedoara and Maramureș (5% each), Sibiu, Arad and Timiș (2.5% each).

*Question 9.* Veneto and Emilia-Romagna (20.5% each) are first on the list of Italian regions of origin of our subjects. They are followed by Lombardy and Tuscany (12.5% each), and Abruzzo (7.5%).

### Section B:

*Question 12.* 76.9% of our subjects think that the number of Italians living in Romania today is large. This shows that they are all aware of the important Italian presence on the Romanian territory and they are part of it.

*Question 13.* Out of the abovementioned subjects 66.7% think that the large number of Italian investors in Transylvania is due to low business costs. 8.3% speak about low living costs, while another 8.3% about less bureaucracy. Consequently, we can easily see that the main reasons for the Italian presence in Transylvania are the economic ones.

*Questions 14 and 15.* When they think about Italy, 41.5% of the subjects refer to their family, 20% to their home, 18.3% to their traditional food, 10.2% to their friends, while 10% to their culture. This shows clearly the Italian personality characterised by strong links with origin, customs, and traditions. When

they think about Romania, 25% of the Italian investors refer to fun, 22.5% to opportunities, 20.3% to beautiful women, 16.2% to intelligent people, while 16% to Dracula. This means that, beside the economic reasons for their coming to Transylvania, there are also other reasons related rather to cultural and traditional aspects. Romanian women are well known for their beauty, Romanian people for its intelligence, while Dracula has become the symbol of Transylvania for the foreigners.

*Questions 17 and 18.* In the opinion of our subjects, language (31% and 19%) and traditions (20.5% and 16.2%) are the two most important things for someone to be considered Italian or Romanian, respectively. This proves once again the similarities between the two countries, mostly related to their common Latin roots.

*Question 21.* The fact that 28.9% of the subjects think that Romanians are considered welcoming by the Italian investors is a clear proof that the latter feel at home in Transylvania.

*Question 22.* 73.5% of the answers refer to the difference in perception when it comes to the way in which the Italians in Romania see the Romanians as compared to Italians in general. This proves that, after having lived and worked in Romania for a while, Italians' impressions change. They start to see the Romanians as their friends.

### Section C:

*Question 24.* 37.8% of our subjects trust much the Romanians in Romania, which is a sign of the friendly and sincere relationship they have with the latter.

*Question 28.* The fact the Italian and Romanian are two very similar Romance languages is underlined once again by the answers provided to this question. Thus, 53.8% of those who filled in the questionnaire understand Romanian very well, while 60.5% speak it fairly well.

*Question 29.* Most Italian investors did not take Romanian lessons when they came to Romania, which proves how easy Romanian seemed to them from the very beginning.

*Question 31.* 95% of the subjects agree with the fact that it is important for an Italian living in Romania to know Romanian very well. It is a sign of the respect the Italians show for the language and the authorities of this country.

*Questions 32, 33 and 34.* The answers to these questions prove that the new means of communication are gaining ground also in the case of the Italian investors in Transylvania. 35.5% send daily e-mails to their family in Italy, while 40.6% send e-mails to their business partners in Italy. 45.9% make daily phone calls to their family, while 48.6% call their business partners. This means that both family and business are important for them. Nonetheless, letters have become

obsolete lately, as most of our subjects use them only several times a year (56% to their family, 58.3% to their friends, 32% to their business partners, and 79.2% to ancient colleagues or other relatives).

Section D:

*Question 36.* 68.4% of the subjects were employers in Italy before coming to Romania. This means that not only professional subordination determine people to invest abroad, but also the need to become more prosperous as an employer.

Section E:

*Question 40.* Most of the Italian investors who answered our questionnaire (73.6%) came to Transylvania between 1996 and 2006. During this period Romania developed very much in all fields. That is why it is a market appropriate for competition.

*Question 42.* When asked about the reasons for their coming to Romania, 56.4% of our subjects admitted that these were financial reasons.

Section F:

*Question 47.* Among the most important reasons of the Italian presence in Romania there are low costs (75.8%), less bureaucracy (52.4%), and language (46.7%).

Section G:

*Question 49.* Most of the Italian investors (45.7%) were supported by Italian friends or people that had already been in Romania at that moment. This shows how important it is to have someone to support you when starting your business abroad.

*Question 50.* 67.5% of our subjects are alone in Romania, 17.5% are with some members of their family, while 7.5% came here with the whole family. As we have already mentioned, it is easier to come alone to a foreign country for a person who has no family obligations. However, those who have a family try to bring all its members in the foreign country. In the case of Romania this proved easier, given the similar mentalities, traditions, customs, and language.

Section H:

*Question 51.* As for their first impression when coming to Romania, this was positive in 61.5% of the cases. Once more, we can see that Italians felt comfortable in Romania from the very beginning.

*Question 54.* Private relations and language prevail over bureaucracy and business in the case of the Italian investors in Romania. Thus, 32.5% feel perfectly accommodated from the point of view of private relations against 7.5% in the

case of bureaucracy and 30% in the case of the business environment. Furthermore, 57.5% feel they have accommodated to the language against 40% with bureaucracy and 47.5% with the business environment.

*Question 56.* As we had expected, 90% of our subjects declare to have Romanian friends. We can easily understand that common roots bring people together.

*Question 57.* Language (40%) and traditions (20%) are considered the most similar elements of the Romanian and Italian culture. As far as differences are concerned, gastronomy (30%), the political system (18%) and bureaucracy (15%) prevail.

#### 1.4. Problems Encountered with the Research

**W**E HAD to face several problems while doing the research with the questionnaires. We will further present a list of them. First of all, it was difficult to make the questionnaire itself, given the fact that we are not a sociologist. It seemed quite problematic to define the sections and the number of questions. So we thought of both form and content. We read theoretical aspects about the sociological inquiry and we also asked the advice of a specialist. Then we decided on the length of the questionnaire, the types of questions and the representative sample. The final version of the questionnaire contains 59 questions that we were supposed to present to 100 persons.

Second, we hesitated on what language to choose for the questionnaire. Of course, as our thesis is written in English, it is obvious that the version included in the paper is in English. However, given the fact that our subjects were Italian people, we also drafted an Italian version of the questionnaire. Moreover, some of the Italian investors in Transylvania already know Romanian very well, so we have a third version in Romanian. Both the Italian and the Romanian version of the questionnaire are attached in the appendices.

Furthermore, another big problem that we would classify as the most important of all was the fact that people did not want to answer our questions. This happened because they had neither the time nor the will to do it. Consequently, our sample was reduced to only 40 persons.

Finally, in some cases people did not understand properly the questions. That is why they gave only partial answers that were either incomplete or unclear. This rendered our task of interpreting the results even more difficult. We decided then not to take into account some of those answers.

## 2. Conclusions

**A**FTER HAVING studied the phenomenon of delocalization of the Italian companies in Transylvania, we can draw some conclusions in this respect. The fall of the communist regime and Romania's evolution towards democracy and a market economy allowed the strengthening of Romanian-Italian economic relations and especially the Italian investments in Romania. In December 1990, the Romanian and Italian governments signed the Agreement on the Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments. This Agreement entered into force starting March 1995. Moreover, in August 2002, Romania and Italy signed the Memorandum of Agreement on the Cooperation in the field of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises.<sup>9</sup>

From the point of view of the investment strategy adopted by the Italian companies abroad, delocalization plays a particular role. It is a characteristic of the Italian industrial system and a predominant activity of the Italian companies in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, such as Romania. We could see that the most important delocalization movement took part between 1996 and 2006, that is, during the last ten years.

In fact, the term "delocalization" refers mainly to the companies from north-eastern Italy, which invest abroad and it refers to the decentralisation of production and services by the total or partial organisation of their activity outside Italy.<sup>10</sup> The Italian companies that come to Transylvania for business usually come from the northeastern, northwestern and the central parts of Italy. The Italian investors mostly settle their business in counties such as Arad, Timiș, Bihor, Cluj, Alba, Sibiu, etc.

Beside this phenomenon of the Italian delocalization in Romania, there is a process that is taking place the other way round: the Romanian migration to Italy for work. Practically speaking, it is a circular movement based on economic matters but also on a common cultural background, Latin traditions and mentalities, and a Romance language.

Moreover, studying the long history of the Italian-Romanian relations we found out that they started in the Middle Ages and continued up to the present. Nowadays, Italy is Romania's first commercial partner, a place that it has constantly occupied since 1997.<sup>11</sup> An example of this long tradition was given by Italy's Prime Minister Romano Prodi, who was the first EU minister that has come to Romania after its accession to the European Union on 1 January 2007.

It seems that the interest of the Italian investors in Romania will last also after the year 2007, given the complementary tendencies of the Romanian economy based on a traditional structure and the Italian economy based on the intensive use of the labour force. Probably, Italians will also become interested in the

sector of services, under the circumstances of the development of the banking system and even the agricultural sector.<sup>12</sup>

As far as the questionnaire is concerned, we found it useful to introduce such an instrument in our research despite the difficulties we encountered with its drafting and filling in. It was interesting to learn how to combine open and closed questions in a quantitative research in order to obtain the expected results.

All in all, it was a real challenge for us to study this very interesting topic of the Italian-Romanian relations.



## Notes

1. Paolo Lemma, vice-president of the Institute for Foreign Trade in Bucharest.
2. Romania comes second in this part of Europe, with about 22 million people, after Poland.
3. Don't know/No answer.
4. See Appendices 2 and 3.
5. See Appendix 1.
6. No answer.
7. Questions nos. 8, 9, 35, 38, 39, 41, 45, 46, 52, and 53.
8. Questions nos. 47, 48, and 57.
9. Anca Stângaciu, *România în contextul integrării în structurile Uniunii Europene: Relațiile economice româno-italiene* (Cluj-Napoca: EFES, 2007), 56.
10. *Ibid.*, 82.
11. *Ibid.*, 59.
12. [www.clubafaceri.ro/info.firmeitaliene](http://www.clubafaceri.ro/info.firmeitaliene), "Italienii propun o strategie specială de dezvoltare a IMM-urilor românești," accessed on 12 November 2007.

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## **Abstract**

### Italian Companies in Transylvania: A Multicultural Approach

This article focuses on the Italian companies that invest in Romania, chiefly in Transylvania. We sought to investigate the possible non-economic reasons that make Italian investors delocalize in Transylvania. By analysing a set of questionnaires that we sent to the representatives of those companies, we drew several conclusions concerning this phenomenon. Practically speaking, it is a circular Italian-Romanian movement based on economic matters but also on a common cultural background, Latin traditions and mentalities, and a Romance language.

## **Keywords**

Italian companies, Transylvania, delocalization, questionnaire, cultural aspects, Latin roots